

Sunday, October 1

Third Day

may we say of that inspired document:

"And for the support of this . . . with a firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." (Declaration of Independence.)

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder Henry D. Taylor, also an Assistant to the Twelve, will speak to us now.

Elder Henry D. Taylor

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

As the Savior went up into a mountain, a great multitude followed him, absorbing with eagerness his profound and divine teachings. Among his instructions was this interesting challenge: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) That same counsel to strive to become perfect applies to the followers of the Lord today, as well as it did to those in the meridian of time.

Achievement of perfection

For mortal man, with all his limitations and weaknesses, to achieve perfection might seem impossible, but the Savior's admonition, given on several different occasions, would indicate that such a worthy goal is attainable.

We recognize that the Savior achieved perfection. However, it was a gradual and continuing process, extending from childhood to maturity. John, the beloved apostle, attests to this natural development in these words: "And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace . . . until he received a fulness." (D&C 93:12-13.)

When he was but 12 years of age, Jesus realized that he was the son of a divine father. When Joseph and Mary, his mother, found him conversing with the wise men in the temple and mildly chided him because of their concern, he replied: ". . . wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49.) Yet the full comprehension of the purpose

of his earthly mission developed within him only as he progressed step by step in unfolding experience and wisdom.

Perfection through adversity

Perfection came to Jesus through many experiences, which involved trials and sorrows. Although begotten of an immortal father, he was born of a mortal mother, through whom he inherited the capacity to be tempted, to suffer, and to die. The apostle Paul testified: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-9.)

Emulate His example:

With the Lord Jesus as an example, we should desire and attempt to pattern our lives after his and follow his teachings in our quest for perfection.

What were his characteristics? Though they are many, time will permit mentioning but a few:

First, he was kind and forgiving. When a woman accused of a sinful act was brought before him, he faced her accusers with the challenge: ". . . He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7.) As he bent down to write upon the ground, her conscience-stricken accusers slunk away. When he raised his head, he noted that only the woman remained. Of her he asked: "Women, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:10-11.)

"The woman was repentant; she remained humbly awaiting the Master's decision, even after her accusers had gone. Jesus did not expressly condone; He declined to condemn; but He sent the sinner away with a solemn [admonition and encouragement to live] a better life." (James E. Talmage, *Jesus The Christ*, p. 406.)

When the Savior hung on the cross, he again taught a powerful lesson in forgiveness. As his body was wracked with the excruciating pain of crucifixion—one of the most inhuman, lingering, and torturous forms of execution—he evidenced no malice toward his tormentors, but mercifully prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. . . ." (Luke 23:34.)

His concern for well-being of others

Among the impressive qualities of our Lord was his concern for the comfort and well-being of others. Upon one occasion the people were so intent on hearing his inspiring words and witnessing the miraculous healings he performed that they remained in the wilderness, oblivious to the passing hours. Evening was drawing nigh. Jesus realized that the people were hungry, and turning to Philip, one of the Twelve, he asked: ". . . Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5.)

Andrew, who was standing nearby, remarked that there was a lad present who possessed five barley loaves and two small fish. Jesus suggested that the people seat themselves in groups of fifties and hundreds. It was determined that about 5,000 men were there, in addition to women and children. The Master took the loaves and fishes, looked toward heaven, pronounced a blessing upon the food, and divided the provisions among the apostles, who distributed them to the people. When all had feasted to their entire satisfaction, there remained 12 baskets filled with the surplus.

Avoidance of Ostentation

The Savior was modest. When performing miraculous healings, he often requested that the person made whole should tell no one.

Fortitude

Again, the Savior was loyal—loyal to his trust and to his mission, even though it involved intense anguish of both body and spirit. The path that he was asked to tread was neither smooth nor easy; it was filled with temptations and afflictions. Realizing that his betrayal was near, he went to Gethsemane, an olive orchard on the slope of Mt. Olivet, accompanied by the remaining 11 of his apostles. Eight of them stopped near the garden entrance; and at the Savior's request, Peter, James, and John continued on with him. He suggested that they wait in a designated place, and then he went on a little farther by himself. He soon found, to his amazement, that his soul had become heavy and sorrowful. As he fell on his face and prayed, his human qualities became manifest. He pleaded: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.)

Again and again he implored the Father with the same yearning entreaty. Then an angel appeared to strengthen him. But not even the presence of this heavenly being could dispel the torment of his soul. The historian Luke, commenting on his suffering, says: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44.)

Concerning this acute distress, a former member of the Twelve in these days has observed:

"Christ's agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause. The thought that He suffered through fear of death is untenable. Death to Him was preliminary to resurrection and triumphal return to the Father from whom He had come, and to a state of glory even

beyond what He had before possessed; and, moreover, it was within His power to lay down His life voluntarily. He struggled and groaned under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive as possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so; for his human organism would have succumbed, and syncope would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion. In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, 'the prince of this world' could inflict. The frightful struggle incident to the temptations immediately following the Lord's baptism was surpassed and overshadowed by this supreme contest with the powers of evil.

"In some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world." (*Jesus The Christ*, p. 613.)

His good will

Perhaps the sweetest attribute in the life of Christ was love. Throughout his life he constantly displayed strong affection and respect for his mother. This tender concern was demonstrated as he hung on the cross and gazed down upon her as she stood weeping beside John, his beloved associate. First he spoke to Mary, saying: "Woman, behold thy son!" and then to John he said: "Behold thy mother! . . ." (John 19:26-27.) The disciple tenderly led the grief-stricken mother away from her dying son, and took her into his own home to care for and protect her.

Shortly after this, Jesus exclaimed in a loud voice of holy triumph: "It is finished . . ." (John 19:30), and then, addressing his Father, he said: "Father,

into thy hands I commend my spirit. . . ." (Luke 23:46.) Bowing his head, he voluntarily gave up his life.

Having been begotten of an immortal sire, Jesus possessed as a heritage the power to withstand death indefinitely. He literally and really gave up his life. It was not taken from him.

Sublime example

We regard the Lord as our everlasting pattern and example. May we then progressively develop within us those traits exemplified by him: kindness, unselfishness, forgiveness, modesty, loyalty, obedience, and love—the forgetting of ourselves to think of others—to the end that we, too, may from our experiences and sufferings become perfect and be privileged to dwell with him in the presence of our Father in heaven.

Recent personal events have brought to me a greater appreciation for the life and the atoning sacrifice of the Savior.

I am so grateful for the knowledge and assurance that family ties do extend beyond this mortal existence and reach into the eternities. To this I bear witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

That was Elder Henry D. Taylor.

The congregation and choir will now join in singing, "Do What Is Right, Let the Consequence Follow." This will be conducted by Jay E. Welch.

After the singing, Elder Bernard P. Brockbank will address us.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Do What Is Right, Let The Consequence Follow."

Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Franklin D. Richards, also an Assistant to the Twelve.